

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for marketing an innovation to a plurality of members in a target community comprising the steps of:

- 5 determining an influence network for the plurality of members in the target community;
identifying opinion leaders from among the members in the influence network;
presenting the innovation to the opinion leaders; and
assisting with dispersion of evaluations of the innovation from opinion leaders to the
members in the target community by using the influence network.

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2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of determining the influence network comprises the steps of:

- providing questionnaires to members in the target community;
receiving completed questionnaires from the members; and
15 analyzing the completed questionnaires to map the influence network.

3. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of determining the influence network comprises the steps of:

- associating each member with a node in the influence network; and
20 determining connections between the nodes in the influence network using relationships
between the members.

4. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of determining the influence network comprises the step of determining at least one technical advice network and at least one trust and friendship network for the influence network.

5 5. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of determining the influence network comprises the step of generating a sociogram of the influence network.

6. An information storage device embodying the sociogram of claim 5.

10 7. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of presenting the innovation to the opinion leaders comprises the steps of:

recruiting the opinion leaders onto at least one panel; and

presenting the innovation to the at least one panel of opinion leaders.

15 8. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of assisting with dispersion of evaluations of the innovation includes at least one of the steps of: sending literature regarding the innovation to members in the target community; sending samples regarding the innovation to members in the target community; sending letters regarding the innovation to members in the target community; sending electronic mail regarding the innovation to members in the target community; making
20 telephone calls regarding the innovation to members in the target community; visiting members in the target community to discuss the innovation; and attending forums for the target community to discuss the innovation with members in the target community.

9. A method as in claim 1, wherein the innovation is at least one of a healthcare product and a healthcare service.

10. A method as in claim 1, wherein the members in the target community are healthcare
5 providers.

11. A computer having software for performing the step of claim 1 of determining the influence network.

10 12. A computer-readable medium having software for performing the step of claim 1 of determining the influence network.

13. A method for marketing an innovation to a plurality of members in a target community comprising the steps of:

15 receiving at least one sociogram for an influence network for the plurality of members in the target community, the influence network comprising at least one technical advice network for members in the target community and a trust and friendship network for members in the target community;

identifying opinion leaders from among the members in at least one of the technical
20 advice networks;

identifying opinion leaders from among the members in the trust and friendship network;
presenting the innovation to the opinion leaders of the technical advice network;

assisting with dispersion of evaluations of the innovation from the opinion leaders of the technical advice network to the members in the target community using the technical advice network and at least one of the sociograms;

5 assisting with dispersion of evaluations on the innovation from members in the technical advice network to the opinion leaders of the trust and friendship network using the technical advice network, the trust and friendship network, and at least one of the sociograms; and

assisting with dispersion of evaluations of the innovation from the opinion leaders of the trust and friendship network to the members in the target community using the trust and friendship network and at least one of the sociograms.

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14. A method as in claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

providing questionnaires to the members in the target community;

receiving completed questionnaires from the members;

15 associating each member in the completed questionnaires with a node in the influence network;

determining connections between the nodes in the influence network using the completed questionnaires;

determining the technical advice network and the trust and friendship network for the influence network; and

20 generating the at least one sociogram for the influence network.

15. A computer having software for the performing the steps of claim 14 of associating each member, determining connections, determining the technical advice network and the trust

and friendship network, and generating the at least one sociogram, wherein the software uses as input information from the completed questionnaires.

16. A computer-readable medium having software for performing the steps of claim 14
5 of associating each member, determining connections, determining the technical advice network and the trust and friendship network, and generating the at least one sociogram, wherein the software uses as input information from the completed questionnaires.